1: Ray E-5 (1928-38) 1939 Plateau

CULTURAL RELATIONS IN THE PLATEAU OF NORTHWESTERN AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

THE Plateau of northwestern America, considered geographically, lies between the Rocky Mountains on the east and the Cascade Mountains on the west. The northern boundary is roughly the great bend of the Fraser River, while on the south this plateau merges with the Colorado Plateau.

In application to the cultural area the term is to a certain extent a misnomer. In the north, tribal areas include adjacent mountainous regions and a number of geological trenches. In fact, the area is quite rough and broken and geologists customarily speak of the interior "plateaus" rather than "plateau." Furthermore, considerable portions of the territories of two tribes, the Kutenai and the Flathead, lie east of the Rocky Mountains.

On the south the boundary is quite arbitrary so far as geography is concerned. Along the east slope of the Cascades the Plateau extends to the California border (to include the Klamath), but farther east the Blue Mountains mark the southern limit. The boundary, more specifically, is that separating Sahaptin and Shoshonean peoples. But even here there is an exception. The Modoc, southernmost of the Sahaptins, exhibit a culture of Californian aspect.[1]

For a long while the Plateau was looked upon as an area of lowly cultural development entirely lacking in individuality. This attitude is typically expressed by Spinden in the conclusion to his study of the Nez Percé Indians:

> One important fact stands out clearly. The culture of the [Plateau] area, as shown by one of its representative tribes, was purely a transitional culture. Its elements were drawn in nearly equal proportion from the Plains and from the Pacific coast. Only a small residuum of autochthonous ideas are found when the borrowed ones are excluded.[2]

[1] Information from Dr Leslie Spier, 1937. My own field work with the Modoc in 1938 points to the same conclusion.

[2] Spinden, *Nez Percé Indians*, p. 270.

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Plateau culture could hardly be more grossly misinterpreted. Proof of this is contained throughout the following pages. Spinden was led astray in two ways: first, he interpreted the heavy Plains overlay that he found among the Nez Percé as typical of the Plateau; secondly, he found few autochthonous ideas because he was doing pioneer work and his brief investigation failed to bring them to light.

The individuality of Plateau culture was first emphasized by Spier in his illuminating survey based upon Klamath customs.[3] Spier's task was specifically that of placing the Klamath in proper cultural setting; at the same time the Plateau was given its first general orientation. The data available to him were insufficient, however, to determine intra-areal relations. But in recent years the Plateau has been receiving a greater share of attention, with the result that no large portion remains entirely unknown.

An attempt is here made to describe the conditions under which the cultural diversity of the Plateau has developed; further, to picture the conceptual structures of various significant complexes in Plateau culture. Several fundamental complexes from the Plateau stock are examined, but no attempt is made to exhaust that stock. Social life receives a considerably greater share of attention than material culture. The former has proved more satisfactory for comparative study, partly because of the nature of the complexes, and partly in consequence of the quality of the available data. And possibly a bias of the author is reflected.

For the most part the structures examined are those within the Plateau since the objective is a picture of intra-areal relationships. But not infrequently the paths followed lead into adjacent areas, and sometimes into the problems of those areas.

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used throughout to designate both Sanpoil and Nespelem; the cultures are identical (Ray, *Sanpoil and Nespelem*).

The Salishan-Shoshonean boundary represents conditions prior to 1800. During the nineteenth century this boundary was situated somewhat farther south. This movement is discussed by Ray and Others, *Tribal Distribution*.

[3] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 224–325.

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It is interesting to note that the Tenino, close by the Dalles, say that the Klamath encourage them to deal in slaves, whereas the Klamath themselves appear to have borrowed the trait from the Dalles.

WARFARE AND PACIFISM

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General areal conditions of concordance and discordance are implicit in the discussions of the preceding section, but specific practices remain to be considered. Standing out boldly over all is the impressive emphasis upon pacifism which characterizes the central region. A very different picture is seen in the south, with intensive conflict as the theme. But the conflict is of the type associated with the Plains, from where it obviously was borrowed. Thus it is not typical of the Plateau. Among the interior Salish of Canada warfare is certainly not absent but no clear pattern emerges; the activities appear to be raids and feuds on a large scale.

Pacifism

The Sanpoil, at the geographical center of the Plateau, emphasize no other value in life more than pacifism, unless it be the fundamental equality of all men. Warfare is virtually unknown to them, and has been unknown from time immemorial. No living man can recount an instance of conflict even from traditional history. Warfare is occasionally mentioned in folk tales and mythology, but the scene is always far distant and the Sanpoil are not involved. There is no question but that the first duty of a chief is to maintain peaceful relations with all other peoples. Upon the slightest threat of warfare the chief calls the assembly together and pleads with the people to maintain neutrality at any cost. The virtues of pacifism are extolled and a strong appeal is made that a long record of peacefulness be not marred. When the Spokane were at war with the whites their chief attempted to persuade his close friend, the Sanpoil chief Kolaskin, to induce his people to join the conflict. Kolaskin was a man who thirsted for glory, but he and the Sanpoil paid no heed to the entreaties.[59]

The Southern Okanogan participate in this ideal of pacifism. Walters states that they "have evidently been a peaceful people for at least several centuries. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Cox describes them as such. . . . The historical stories of battle obtained are of occurrences in a past so distant that the accounts have a mythological flavor."[60]

[59] Ray, *Sanpoil and Nespelem*, pp. 25–27, 114 f. [60] Cline, *Southern Okanagon*, pp. 79 f.

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101 131 THE INLAND FAMILIES, constituting the fifth and last division of the Columbians, inhabit the region between the Cascade Range and the eastern limit of what I term the Pacific States, from 52° 30′ to 45° of north latitude. These bounds are tolerably distinct; though that on the south, separating the eastern portions of the Columbian and Californian groups, is irregular and marked by no great river, mountain chain, or other prominent physical feature. These inland natives of the Northwest occupy, in person, character, and customs, as well as in the location of their home, an intermediate position between the coast people already described — to whom they are pronounced superior in most respects — and the Rocky Mountain or eastern tribes. Travelers crossing the Rocky Mountains into this territory from the east, or entering it from the Pacific by way of the Columbia or Fraser, note contrasts on passing the limits, sufficient to justify me in regarding its inhabitants as one people for the purposes aimed at in this volume.[140] Instead, there-

606 *Trav.*, pp. 416, 441–2, 504, 523–4. 'Thorough-bred hypocrites and liars.' 'The Killymucks the most roguish.' Industry, patience, sobriety and ingenuity are their chief virtues; thieving, lying, incontinence, gambling and cruelty may be classed among their vices. *Cox's Adven.*, vol. i., pp. 115, 131, 296–7, 302, 304–5, 321, vol. ii., p. 133. At Wishiam 'they were a community of arrant rogues and freebooters.' *Irving's Astoria*, pp. 322, 342. 'Lying is very common; thieving comparatively rare.' *White's Ogn.*, p. 207. 'Do not appear to possess a particle of natural good feeling.' *Townsend's Nar.*, p. 183. At Coos Bay 'by no means the fierce and warlike race found further to the northward.' *Wells*, in *Harper's Mag.*, vol. xiii., p. 601. Umqua and Coose tribes are naturally industrious; the Suislaws the most advanced; the Alcea not so enterprising. *Sykes*, in *Ind. Aff. Rept.*, 1860, p. 215. Calapooias, a poor, cowardly, and thievish race. *Miller*, in *Id.*, 1857, p. 364; *Nicolay's Ogn. Ter.*, p. 151; *Domenech's Deserts*, vol. i., p. 87, vol. ii., pp. 16, 36; *Warre and Vavasour*, in *Martin's Hud. B.*, p. 83; *Palmer's Jour.*, pp. 84, 105; *Parker's Explor. Tour.*, pp. 249–50; *Ind. Life*, pp. 1–4, 210; *Fitzgerald's Vanc. Isl.*, p. 196; *Schoolcraft's Arch.*, vol. iii., p. 207, etc.

101 131 181 197 [140] 'They all resemble each other in general characteristics.' *Parker's Explor. Tour.*, p. 229. Shushwaps and Salish all one race. *Mayne's B. C.*, p. 296–7. 'The Indians of the interior are, both physically and morally, vastly superior to the tribes of the coast.' *Id.*, p. 242. 'The Kliketat near Mount Rainier, the Walla-Wallas, and the Okanagan....speak kindred dialects.' *Ludewig, Ab. Lang.*, p. 170. The best-supported opinion is that the inland were of the same original stock with the lower tribes. *Dunn's Oregon*, p. 316. 'On leaving the verge of the Carrier country, near Alexandria, a marked change is at once perceptible.' *Anderson*, in *Hist. Mag.*, vol. vii., p. 77. Inland tribes differ widely from the piscatorial tribes. *Ross' Adven.*, p. 127. 'Those residing near the Rocky Mountains....are and always have been superior races to those living on the lower Columbia.' *Alvord*, in *Schoolcraft's Arch.*, vol. v., p. 654. 'I was particularly struck with their

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fore, of treating each family separately, as has been done with the coast divisions of the group, I deem it more convenient, as well as less monotonous to the reader, to avoid repetition by describing the manners and customs of all the people within these limits together, taking care to note such variations as may be found to exist. The division into families and nations, made according to principles already sufficiently explained, is as follows, beginning again at the north:

THE SHUSHWAPS, our first family division, live between 52° 30′ and 49° in the interior of British Columbia, occupying the valleys of the Fraser, Thompson, and Upper Columbia rivers with their tributary streams and lakes. They are bounded on the west by the Nootkas and on the north by the Carriers, from both of which families they seem to be distinct. As national divisions of this family may be mentioned the Shushwaps proper, or *Atnahs*,[141] who occupy the whole northern portion of the territory; the *Okanagans*,[142] in the valley of the lake and river of the same name; and the *Kootenais*,[143] who

vast superiority (on the Similkameen River, Lat. 49° 30′, Long. 120° 30′) in point of intelligence and energy to the Fish Indians on the Fraser River, and in its neighbourhood.' *Palmer*, in *B. C. Papers*, vol. iii., p. 84. Striking contrast noted in passing up the Columbia. *Hale's Ethnog.*, in *U. S. Ex. Ex.*, vol. vi., p. 199.

[141] 'The Shewhapmuch....who compose a large branch of the Saeliss family,' known as *Nicule-much*—corrupted by the Canadians into Couteaux—below the junction of the Fraser and Thompson. *Anderson*, in *Hist. Mag.*, vol. vii., p. 76–7. Atnahs is their name in the Takali language, and signifies 'strangers.' 'Differ so little from their southern neighbors, the Salish, as to render a particular description unnecessary.' *Hale's Ethnog.*, in *U. S. Ex. Ex.*, vol. vi., p. 205. They were called by Mackenzie the Chin tribe, according to *Prichard's Researches*, vol. v., p. 427, but Mackenzie's Chin tribe was north of the Atnahs, being the Nagailer tribe of the Carriers. See *Mackenzie's Voy.*, pp. 257–8, and map.

[142] 'About Okanagan, various branches of the Carrier tribe.' *Nicolay's Om. Ter.*, p. 143. 'Okanagans, on the upper part of Frazer's River.' *Ludewig, Ab. Lang.*, p. 170.

[143] Also known as Flat-bows. 'The poorest of the tribes composing the Flathead nation.' *McCormick*, in *Ind. Aff. Rept.*, 1867, p. 211. 'Speaking a language of their own, it is not easy to imagine their origin; but it appears probable that they once belonged to some more southern tribe, from which they became shut off by the intervention of larger tribes.' *Mayne's B. C.*, p. 297. 'In appearance, character, and customs, they resemble more the Indians east of the Rocky Mountains than those of Lower Oregon.' *Hale's Ethnog.*, in *U. S. Ex. Ex.*, vol. vi., p. 205. 'Les Arcs-à-Plats, et les Koctenais sont connus dans le pays sous le nom de Skalzi.' *De Smet, Miss. de l'Oré-gon*, p. 80.

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burial are held most sacred. Mounds of stones surmounted with crosses indicate in later times the conversion of the natives to a foreign religion.[194]

In character and in morals,[195] as well as in physique, the

[194] The Sokulks wrap the dead in skins, bury them in graves, cover with earth, and mark the grave by little pickets of wood struck over and about it. On the Columbia below the Snake was a shed-tomb sixty by twelve feet, open at the ends, standing east and west. Recently dead bodies wrapped in leather and arranged on boards at the west end. About the centre a promiscuous heap of partially decayed corpses; and at eastern end a mat with twenty-one skulls arranged in a circle. Articles of property suspended on the inside and skeletons of horses scattered outside. About the Dalles eight vaults of boards eight feet square, and six feet high, and all the walls decorated with pictures and carvings. The bodies were laid east and west. *Lewis and Clarke's Trav.*, pp. 344–5, 359–60, 379–80, 557–8. Okanagans observe silence about the death-bed, but the moment the person dies the house is abandoned, and clamorous mourning is joined in by all the camp for some hours; then dead silence while the body is wrapped in a new garment, brought out, and the lodge torn down. Then alternate mourning and silence, and the deceased is buried in a sitting posture in a round hole. Widows must mourn two years, incessantly for some months, then only morning and evening *Ross' Advent.*, pp. 321–2. Frantic mourning, cutting the flesh, etc., by Nez Percés. *Ross' Fur Hunters*, vol. i., pp. 234–5, 238–9, vol. ii., p. 139. Destruction of horses and other property by Spokanes. *Cox's Advent.*, vol. i., pp. 200–1. A shushwap widow instigates the murder of a victim as a sacrifice to her husband. The horses of a Walla Walla chief not used after his death. *Kane's Wand.*, pp. 178–9, 264–5, 277, 289. Hundreds of Wascó bodies piled in a small house on an island, just below the Dalles. A Walla Walla chief caused himself to be buried alive in the grave of his last son. *Hines' Voy.*, pp. 159, 184–8. Among the Yakimas and Kliketats the women do the mourning, living apart for a few days, and then bathing. Okanagan bodies strapped to a tree. Stone mounds over Spokane graves. *Gibbs and Stevens*, in *Pac. R. R. Rept.*, vol. i., pp. 405, 413, vol. xii., pt. i., p. 150. Pend d'Oreilles buried old [847] and young alive when unable to take care of them. *Ind. Aff. Rept.*, 1854, pp. 211, 238. 'High conical stacks of drift-wood' over Walla Walla graves. [888] *Townsend's Nar.*, p. 157. Shushwaps often deposit dead in trees. If in the ground, always cover grave with stones. *Mayne's B. C.*, p. 304. Killing a slave by Wascos. *White's Ogn.*, pp. 260–3. Dances and prayers for three [766] days at Nez Percé chief's burial. *Irving's Bonneville's Advent.*, p. 283. Burying infant with parents by Flatheads. *De Smet, Voy.*, p. 173. Light wooden palings about Shushwap graves. *Milton and Cheadle's North. Pass.*, p. 242; *Alvord*, in *Schoolcraft's Arch.*, vol. v., p. 655; *Parker's Explor. Tour*, p. 104; *Palmer*, in *B. C. Papers*, pt. iii., p. 85; *Gass' Jour.*, p. 219; *Ind. Life*, p. 55; *Tolmie*, in *Lord's Nat.*, vol. ii., pp. 237–8, 260–1.

[195] Sokulks 'of a mild and peaceable disposition,' respectful to old age. 181
Chilluckittequaws 'unusually hospitable and good humoured.' Chopunnish 'the most amiable we have seen. Their character is placid and gentle, rarely moved into passion.' 'They are indeed selfish and avaricious.' Will pilfer small articles. *Lewis and Clarke's Trav.*, pp. 338, 341, 351, 376, 556–8, 564. The Flatheads 'se distinguent par la civilité, l'honnêteté, et la bonté.' *De Smet, Voy.*, pp. 31–2, 38–40, 47–50, 163–74, 202–4. Flatheads 'the best Indians of the mountains and the plains,—honest, brave, and docile.' Kootenais 'men of great docility and artlessness of character.' *Stevens and Hoecken*, in *De Smet's West. Miss.*, pp. 281, 284, 290, 300. Coeurs d'Alène selfish and poor-spirited. *De Smet, Miss. de l'Orégon*, p. 329. In the Walla Wallas 'an air of open unsuspecting confidence,' 'natural politeness,' no obtrusive familiarity. Flatheads 'frank and hospitable.' Except cruelty to captives.

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181 inland native is almost unanimously pronounced superior to the dweller on the coast. The excitement of the chase, of war, and of athletic sports ennobles the mind as it develops the body; and although probably not by nature less indolent than their western neighbors, yet are these natives of the interior driven by circumstances to habits of industry, and have much less leisure time for the cultivation of the lower forms of vice. As a race, and compared with the average American aborigines, they are honest, intelligent, and pure in morals. Travelers are liable to form their estimate of national character from a view, perhaps unfair and prejudiced, of the actions of a few individuals encountered; consequently qualities the best and the worst have been given by some to each of the nations now under consideration. For the best reputation the Nez Percés, Flatheads and Kootenais have always been rivals; their good qualities have been praised by all, priest, trader and tourist. Honest, just, and often charitable; ordinarily cold and reserved, but on occasions social and almost gay; quick-tempered and revengeful under what they consider in-

have 'fewer failings than any of the tribes I ever met.' Brave, quiet, and amenable to their chiefs. Spokanes 'quiet, honest, inoffensive,' but rather indolent. 'Thoughtless and improvident.' Okanagans 'Indolent rascals;' 'an honest and quiet tribe.' Sanspoils dirty, slothful, dishonest, quarrelsome, etc. Coeurs d'Alène 'uniformly honest;' 'more savage than their neighbours.' Kootenais honest, brave, jealous, truthful. Kamloops 'thieving and quarrelling.' *Cox's Adven.*, vol. i., pp. 145, 148, 192, 199, 239–40, 262–3, 344, vol. ii., pp. 44, 87–8, 109, 145–60. Okanagans active and industrious, revengeful, generous and brave. *Ross' Adven.*, pp. 142, 290–5, 327–9. Skeen 'a hardy, brave people.' Cayuses far more vicious and ungovernable than the Walla Wallas. Nez Percés treacherous and villainous. *Kane's Wand.*, pp. 263, 280, 290, 307–8, 315. Nez Percés 'a quiet, civil, people, but proud and haughty.' *Palmer's Jour.*, pp. 128, 48, 53, 59, 61, 124–7. 'Kind to each other.' 'Cheerful and often gay, sociable, kind and affectionate, and anxious to receive instruction.' 'Lying scarcely known.' *Parker's Explor. Tour*, pp. 97, 105, 232, 239, 303–4, 311–12. Of the Nicutemuchs 'the habitual vindictiveness of their character is fostered by the ceaseless feuds.' 'Nearly every family has a minor vendetta of its own.' 'The races that depend entirely or chiefly on fishing, are immeasurably inferior to those tribes who, with nerves and sinews braced by exercise, and minds comparatively ennobled by frequent excitement, live constantly amid war and the chase.' *Anderson*, in *Hist. Mag.*, vol. vii., pp. 77–80. Inland tribes of British Columbia less industrious and less provident than the more sedentary coast Indians. *Mayne's B. C.*, pp. 301, 297. Sahaptins 'cold, taciturn, high-tempered, warlike, fond of hunting.' Palouse, Yakimas, Kliketats, etc., of a 'less hardy and active temperament' than the Nez Percés. *Hale's Ethnog.*, in *U. S. Ex. Ex.*, vol. vi., pp. 199, 210–13. Cayuses 'dreaded by their neigh-

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justice, but readily appeased by kind treatment; cruel only to captive enemies, stoical in the endurance of torture; devotedly attached to home and family; these natives probably come as near as it is permitted to flesh-and-blood savages to the traditional noble red man of the forest, sometimes met in romance. It is the pride and boast of the Flathead that his tribe has never shed the blood of a white man. Yet none, whatever their tribe, could altogether resist the temptation to steal horses from their neighbors of a different tribe, or in former times, to pilfer small articles, wonderful to the savage eye, introduced by Europeans. Many have been nominally converted by the zealous labors of the Jesuit Fathers, or Protestant missionaries; and several nations have greatly improved, in material condition as well as in character, under their change of faith. As Mr Alexander Ross remarks, "there is less crime in an Indian camp of five hundred souls than there is in a civilized village of but half that number. Let the lawyer or moralist point out the cause."

bors on account of their courage and warlike spirit.' Walla Wallas 'notorious as thieves since their first intercourse with whites.' 'Indolent, superstitious, drunken and debauched. Character of Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, Umatillas. *Ind. Aff. Rept.*, 1854, pp. 207–9, 211, 218, 223, 282, 1861, pp. 164–5. Yakimas and Kliketats 'much superior to the river Indians.' *Stevens*, in *Pac. R. R. Rept.*, vol. i., pp. 405, 298, 403, 416, vol. xii., pt. i., p. 139. Wascos 'exceedingly vicious.' *Hines' Voy.*, pp. 159, 169. The Nez Percés 'are, certainly, more like a nation of saints than a horde of savages.' Skyuses, Walla Wallas. *Irving's Bonneville's Adven.*, pp. 101, 287, 289–90, 300. Tushepaws; *Irving's Astoria*, p. 316. Thompson River Indians rather a superior and clever race. *Victoria Colonist*, Oct., 1860. 'Indians from the Rocky mountains to the falls of Columbia, are an honest, ingenuous, and well disposed people,' but rascals below the falls. *Gass' Jour.*, p. 304. Flathead 'fierceness and barbarity in war could not be exceeded.' *Nicolay's Ogn. Ter.*, p. 153. Flatheads, Walla Wallas and Nez Percés; *Gray's Hist. Ogn.*, pp. 171, 219. Kootenais; *Palliser's Explor.*, pp., 44, 73. Salish, Walla Wallas; *Domenech's Deserts*, vol. i., p. 88, vol. ii., p. 64. Walla Wallas, Cayuses, and Nez Percés; *White's Oregon*, p. 174. Walla Wallas, Kootenais; *Lord's Nat.*, vol. ii., pp. 85, 178. Flatheads, Nez Percés; *Dunn's Oregon*, pp. 311, 315, 326–8. Nez Percés; *Catlin's N. Am. Ind.*, vol. ii., p. 109; *Franchère's Nar.*, p. 268. Kayuses, Walla Wallas; *Townsend's Nar.*, p. 156. Sahaptins; *Wilkes' Hist. Ogn.*, p. 106. Nez Percés; *Hastings' Emigrants' Guide*, p. 59. Flatheads; *Ind. Life*, pp. ix., x., 25. At Dalles; *Wilkes' Nar.*, in *U. S. Ex. Ex.*, vol. iv., p. 412. Shushwaps; *Grant's Ocean to Ocean*, pp. 288–304, 313. At Dalles; *Hunt*, in *Nouvelles Annales des Voy.*, 1821, tom. x., p. 82; *Stuart*, in *Id.*, 1821, tom. xii., p. 43. Pend d'Oreilles; *Joset*, in *Id.*, 1849, tom. cxxiii., pp. 384–40.